

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

If children are to get the greatest benefit from their education at St Paul's, it is important that they have good attendance and arrive punctually. As children grow and prepare for their next stages of education and employment they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others and employers. We will do all that we can to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Where children are not conforming to our high expectations for attendance and punctuality we will put into place effective strategies to bring about improvement.

Aim

Working in partnership with parents all staff at St Paul's will do all they can to ensure that children come to school happily, willingly and punctually to ensure that all gain the greatest possible value from their education.

Objectives

- To ensure that all children attend school well.
- To ensure that all children are punctual.
- To work in partnership with parents/carers in ensuring that their children attend school well and that they arrive on time.
- To keep good records of attendance through the school registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
- To work effectively with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and other external agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly and efficiently.
- To monitor closely children with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents and where appropriate other agencies to bring about improvement.

Definitions

Every half day absence from school is classified as either authorised or unauthorised absence.

- An absence is classified as **authorised** when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason, such as illness, and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority.
- An absence is classified as **unauthorised** when a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Strategies

- All staff will complete registers accurately for each session (morning and afternoon) and will draw to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher attention any absences that are cause for concern.
- Children arriving late will be carefully monitored and action taken as appropriate.
- Parents will be asked to telephone (using the dedicated absence line) or notify the school office if their child is absent or ill.
- The school office will make telephone contact with a home when a child is absent if the parents have not notified the school that their child is absent.
- Where a child is developing a pattern of 'occasional' absences the parent will be contacted to discuss the pattern of absences.
- Letters will be sent to parents of children with low attendance on a termly basis.
- The school will use welfare and attendance officers to follow up absences that are causing concern.

- Where necessary the school will work closely with Tameside to take action against those unlawfully keeping learners from school.

Promoting good attendance

Parents, Children and staff all have a part to play in promoting good attendance. To support this St Paul's will:-

- Give parents, children and staff details on attendance through weekly newsletters.
- Report to Parents annually on attendance and punctuality rates.
- Celebrate good attendance through termly and annual 100% attendance certificates.
- Approach individual parents where there is a cause for concern with regard to punctuality and attendance.
- Work together with Parents to raise attendance throughout school.

Medical Appointments

We ask that wherever possible medical appointments are made outside of school hours. It is most important that you inform the school office, prior to the appointment, if your child is to be absent from school.

Long term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send work home, so that the child can keep up with their work.

If appropriate the school will liaise with the EWO service in order to provide appropriate support.

Requests for leave of absence

Following a change in the law from 1st September 2013 **headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time** unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any absences taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract a penalty notice.

Penalty Notices

The 2007 Education (Penalty Notices) regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request this information from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.